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DEPT FOR WHA K. MADISON, WHA/CEN, S/WCI, USAID/LAC M. MAGAN

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TAGS: [EALD](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#)  
PTER, KAWC, PHUM, PREF  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER CALDERA ASSURES DAS MADISON HE  
WILL CONTINUE HAMMERING CHAVEZ

REF: A. MANAGUA 0882

[1](#)B. MANAGUA 0755  
[1](#)C. STATE 48524

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

[1](#)1. (S) SUMMARY: Foreign Minister Norman Caldera recently told DAS Madison, USAID's DAA Magan, and Ambassador that he will continue hammering Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and Sandinista (FSLN) leader Daniel Ortega on their false accusations of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua's internal affairs. He believes that Chavez' public endorsement of Ortega has "cleared the air" over recent criticism of the U.S. Ambassador's public statements. Caldera also thinks the Venezuelan oil deal with members of Nicaragua's Mayors' Association is designed to attract more voters to Ortega. When he travels to Washington next week, Caldera will meet with OAS officials to request assistance in preparing a draft reform electoral law and impress upon them the need prevent presidential candidate disqualifications. Caldera warned that the FSLN is poised to commit grand fraud in the November elections. He also suggested Nicaragua might be able to accept two or three of the Uighur detainees in Guantanamo (Reftels). END SUMMARY.

CALLING OFF THE "HOUNDS"

[1](#)2. (C) Foreign Minister Norman Caldera told DAS Madison, USAID's DAA Magan, and Ambassador on April 26 of his plans to continue hammering Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez and FSLN leader Daniel Ortega on their false accusations of U.S. intervention in Nicaragua's internal affairs. In Caldera's view, the Venezuelans, not the Americans are guilty of intervention, as evidenced by Chavez' recent public endorsement of Ortega. On the positive side, Chavez' unabashed endorsement has "cleared the air" over recent criticism of the U.S. Ambassador's public statements. Now the U.S. has a "clean slate" to continue speaking out frankly, opined Caldera. Chavez's notion that if an action suits him (and Ortega) it is "solidarity," while if an action counters his interests, it is "intervention," is nonsense. The Foreign Minister shared that he will be doing some straight talking of his own next week when he travels to Washington to meet with the Heritage Foundation and a number of U.S. lawmakers, including some who do not share his and the Nicaraguan government's assessment of the Ortega threat.

APPROACHING THE OAS ON ELECTORAL REFORM AND NATIONAL IDS

[1](#)3. (C) During his time in Washington, Caldera will also meet with OAS officials to request assistance in preparing a draft reform electoral law. He explained that the Inter-American Human Rights court in San Jose had ruled in favor of Miskito party YATAMA that Nicaragua's current electoral law violates human rights as there is currently no recourse through the courts to contest a decision by the Supreme Electoral Commission (CSE). Caldera explained that he will use this decision as an excuse to seek broader electoral reforms. Doing so, he believes, might also draw YATAMA away from the FSLN (Note: A dissident YATAMA faction opposes YATAMA leadership's alliance with Ortega. Post, through IRI, is helping this dissident group arrange a special assembly on May 14-15 to counter Ortega's proposed accord with YATAMA. End Note.)

[1](#)4. (C) In addition to discussing the electoral law, Caldera will raise with the OAS a case involving the right of overseas Nicaraguans to apply for, and receive, national ID cards (cedulas). The CSE has not provided the cedula application form to consulates abroad so that expats may register for the document, he explained. (Note: Cedula also serve as voter ID cards. Either a cedula or a temporary cedula is required to vote.) Caldera added that he will also broach his concerns that the OAS must be prepared to counter the CSE if it disqualifies presidential candidates Montealegre or Lewites.

THE FSLN STAGED THE MARCH ELECTIONS TO LOOK GOOD

[1](#)5. (C) Continuing on the elections theme, Caldera warned that the FSLN is poised to commit major fraud on November 5 to give Ortega a chance t

FORWARD MOVEMENT ON CAFTA, POSSIBLY MANPADS

[1](#)6. (C) The Ambassador remarked that despite the current problems, some progress had been made, citing the fact that Assembly President Eduardo Gomez had assured him that the Legislature will soon place MANPADS destruction on its agenda and that in a recent meeting with Assembly deputies, including two Sandinistas, the group indicated that the destruction of 651 MANPADS might be feasible. Sharing the Ambassador's optimism, Caldera noted that CAFTA is already making a positive impact. Thanks to CAFTA two new textile

factories, one U.S. and one Taiwanese, will expand their operations in Nicaragua. He explained that during the Sandinista era, Nicaragua was left behind in developing its textile industry, but CAFTA will turn around the situation.

EU WOOS CENTAMS ON FREE TRADE ACCORD  
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17. (C) Foreign Minister Caldera mentioned that he and other Central American foreign ministers will travel to Vienna next month to meet EU countries to discuss a free trade agreement.

The EU does not want to see Chevrolets replacing Mercedes, quipped Caldera, and is offering up front to eliminate tariffs on Central American bananas to sweeten the deal. Ambassador remarked that the Europeans are tough negotiators.

Caldera concurred, expecting considerable "table banging" before they will reach agreement, which will be complicated by the EU's desire for one Central American negotiator, not five. Achieving a unitary negotiating team, however, only makes sense for those Centam countries covered by a customs union and a common external tariff, explained Caldera, who added that neither Panama nor Costa Rica currently adhere to that joint regimen.

NICARAGUA MIGHT ACCEPT TWO OR THREE UIGHURS  
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18. (S) Following up on the possible resettlement of Uighur men who had been Guantanamo detainees (Reftels), Caldera remarked that the Nicaraguan government is currently reviewing the list of detainees and might be able to accept two or three. "Friends must help another," he said.

19. (U) Participants:

Nicaragua:  
Foreign Minister Norman Caldera

U.S.:  
Deputy Assistant Secretary Kirsten Madison  
Ambassador Paul Trivelli  
USAID DAA Mike Magan  
A/DCM Alex Dickie  
Polcouns Victoria Alvarado (notetaker)  
TRIVELLI